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C O N F I D E N T I A L AMMAN 000299

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 01/31/2019  
TAGS: PREL PHUM PTER KISL JO  
SUBJECT: GOJ MOVES TO PUT MUSLIM BROTHERHOOD BACK IN THE BOX

REF: A. AMMAN 219  
1B. AMMAN 147  
1C. 08 AMMAN 3116  
1D. 08 AMMAN 1871  
1E. 08 AMMAN 1570

Classified By: Ambassador R. Stephen Beecroft for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

11. (U) Jordan's Muslim Brotherhood (JMB) publicly denounced the government's denial of its request to hold a "Thanks and Victory" rally in Amman on January 30. In a January 31 statement, the group described the decision to prevent the rally as "an official siege" by the government after the Interior Ministry resumed implementation of the Public Gatherings Law requiring groups to obtain a permit to hold demonstrations. The law had been waived for the duration of Israeli military campaign, allowing almost daily protests throughout Jordan that helped the JMB and its political arm, the Islamic Action Front (IAF), to expand and strengthen its powerbase (Ref A).

12. (U) IAF Secretary General Zaki Bani Irsheid publicly praised the GOJ'S decision to suspend the law while Israeli operations were ongoing in Gaza, stating that the peaceful nature of the rallies demonstrated that the requirement was generally unnecessary. The resumption of the Public Gathering Law "would reflect on Jordan's reputation," Irsheid asserted.

13. (C) Comment: The GOJ decision to deny the JMB rally after allowing hundreds of such events in the past month indicates that it is indeed hoping to put the Islamist movement "back in the box," as Royal Guard commander Prince Ali told the Ambassador on January 22 (Ref A).

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Beecroft